

Illinois Success Story



Kim Shackelford

Owner

Asili Chi Salon & Spa
Chicago, Illinois

SBA ARRA Loan through Seaway Bank & Trust Company

"Hey Make Me Over"

Nestled on the Near Westside of Chicago, not far from Oprah Winfrey's famed Harpo Studios, there is an up and coming salon called Asili Chi. This Aveda Concept Salon and Spa goes beyond the traditional offerings of standard salon and spa services. Asili Chi offers an experience and a new way to invigorate ones' life. It is chic, it is cosmopolitan, and it is affordable treating all ethnicities to a smorgasbord of expert services. This two level urban retreat makes sure that its guests are relaxed and well treated. Surrounded by brilliant orange and red colors accentuated by a dark wood hue, this salon provides the ambiances fitting kings and queens let alone the average person that just wants to take a moment from of its busy schedule to just get away. But, this fantastic salon almost did not come to be.

Kim Shackelford armed with a dream to offset a personal family tragedy had a dream in mind. In honor of her parents, Kim wanted to open Asili Chi. The name is a combination of two foreign words. "Asili" comes from Swahili which means "new beginnings," and "Chi" which means "flow of energy." Not only is this a befitting honor for her parents, but it is also an accurate description of this little dynamo's ambitions to succeed. With a substantial bank roll in hand that she earned as a mortgage banker, Kim invested well over \$400,000 dollars to make her dream come true.

But with the nation beseeched with hard times, Kim soon realized that this probably was not the best time to take on a venture of this magnitude. However, the salon soon took off, and Kim began building up clientele like a wild fire going through California. As her working capital dwindled, she still needed to get inventory and make a few more minor

improvements to the salon if she was to continue to grow her business. However, no one would help her fund the last part of the venture until she met Arlene Williams, Senior Vice President of Seaway Bank and Trust (SNB).

Listening to Kim's plight, Arlene dared to put a loan together where most bankers trembled in their boots. Working closely with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and its New American Recovery and Reinvestment Act loan programs, Arlene was able to fashion a \$150,000 SBA loan that allowed Kim to continue to grow the dream.

Today, as you walk past 900 West Jackson, any passerby can see the styling team in action whipping up hairdos and makeovers meant for the social elite. The multicultural staff provides its clients with a vast menu of hair, body, skin and nail services meant to rejuvenate the body, mind and spirit. On the lower level rests a serene spa environment that offers tranquil treatment rooms where massage therapists perform their magic. As a bonus, Asili Chi also has a bar that offers drinks and appetizers to its customers.

With over 3,000 square feet of loft space, Asili Chi will be offering wine tasting events and fashion shows in the near future that only enhances its trendsetting style promotion packages. Promotion packages, such as "the hand and feet retreat" and "the elemental nature massage," is just a living testimony of Ms. Shackelford's desire to give her clients an exclusive experience.

By reflecting an innate style and cultural spirit committed to encouraging a lifestyle that is cosmopolitan and chic while remaining socially and environmentally conscious, this memorial to Kim's parents is indeed a "new beginning with a flow of energy" that should last a life time.

Congratulations Kim, and may you continue to invigorate your senses with a fusion of art, fashion, hair, body, and mind.